

UN Security Council (UNSC)

Why in news?

Recently, the UN General Assembly elected five new members to serve as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council.

[United Nations \(UN\)](#) is a global diplomatic and political organization dedicated to international peace and stability.

What is United Nations Security Council (UNSC)?

- **Establishment** - It was established under the *United Nations Charter* and is *one of the six main organs* of UN.
- **Membership** - It consists of *ten elected members*, and *five permanent members (P5)*.
- China, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation are the P5.

Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia to serve as non-permanent members on the Security Council for two-year terms from 2024 to 2026 by replacing Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland.

| UNSC Member States | | |
|--|--|--|
| Permanent members | Non-Permanent Members | |
| | End Term 2026 | End Term 2025 |
| USA UK Russia China France | Denmark Greece Pakistan Panama Somalia | Algeria Guyana Republic of Korea Sierra Leona Slovenia |

- **Purposes** - It has *four purposes* which are
 - to maintain international peace and security
 - to develop friendly relations among nations
 - to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human right
 - to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations
- **Organisation** - It held its *first session in 1946 in London*.
- Since its first meeting, it has taken *permanent residence at the UN Headquarters* in New York City.

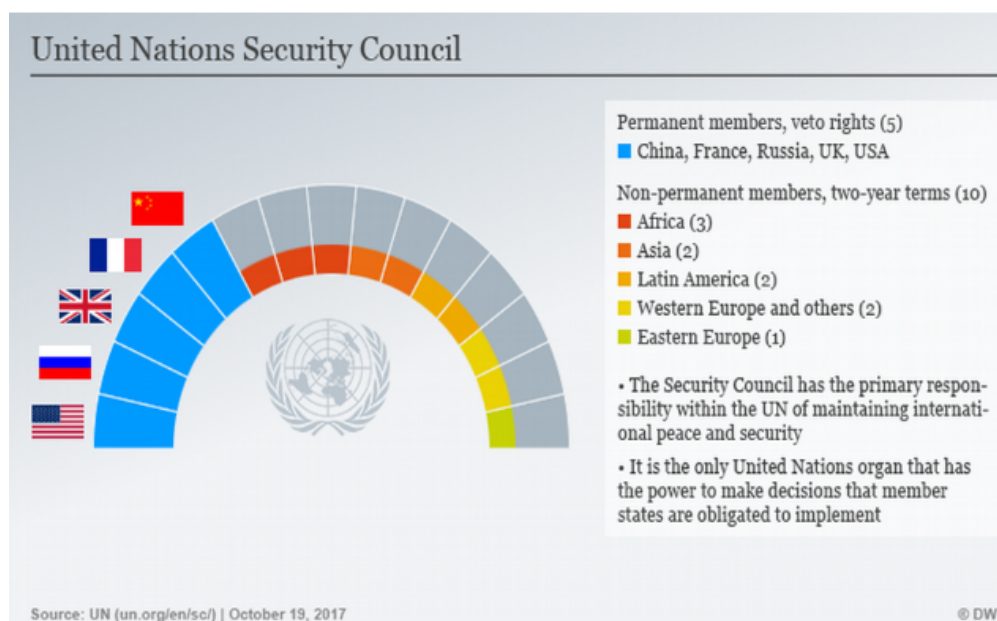
UNSC also travelled to many cities, holding sessions in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1972, in Panama City, Panama, and in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1990.

- A representative of each of its members must be present at all times at UN Headquarters so that the Security Council can meet at any time as the need arises.
- **Importance** - All members of the UN agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the UNSC.
- While other organs of the UN make recommendations to member states, only the UNSC has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.

UNSC is the only U.N. body that can make **legally binding** decisions such as imposing sanctions and authorizing use of force.

How non-permanent seats of UNSC works?

- There are ten non-permanent members in UNSC.
- **Mode of selection** - They are *elected by the UN General Assembly* (UNGA).
- **Method of Election** - The nominated countries require a minimum of *two-thirds majority* of all Member States present and voting in the 193-member UNGA.
- It is held in a *secret ballot*.
- **Tenure** - They are elected for *two-year* terms.
- So *every year, the UNGA elects five non-permanent members* out of the total 10.
- **Distribution of seats** - These 10 seats are distributed among the regions of the world.



- There is an informal understanding between the Asia and Africa groups to reserve *one seat for an Arab country*.
- The Africa and Asia Pacific group takes *turns every two years* to put up an Arab candidate.

- **Presidency of the Council** - It is held by each of the members in turn *for one month*, following the *English alphabetical order* of the Member States names.
- **Non-Council Member States** - *More than 50 UN member States* have never been Members of the UNSC.
- A State which is a Member of the UN but not of the UNSC *may participate, without a vote*, in its discussions when the Council considers that country's interests are affected.

India in UNSC

- India has been a non-permanent member of the UNSC for **eight times**.
- 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992, 2011-2012, 2021-2022
- Unlike Africa, which has formalised a system of rotation of its three seats, the Asia Pacific grouping has often seen contests for seats.
- Back *in 1975*, there was a *contest between India and Pakistan*, which went into eight rounds, with Pakistan finally winning the seat.
- And in *1996*, *India lost a contest to Japan*.

What are functions and powers of UNSC?

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the UNSC are:

- To maintain *international peace and security* in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations.
- To *investigate* any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction.
- To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement.
- To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments.
- To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken.
- To call on Members to *apply economic sanctions* and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression.
- To take *military action* against an aggressor.
- To *recommend the admission* of new Members.
- To exercise the *trusteeship functions* of the United Nations in "strategic areas".
- To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.
- **UNSC Sanctions** - UNSC can take action to maintain or restore international peace and security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- Sanctions measures, *under Article 41*, encompass a broad range of enforcement options that do *not involve the use of armed force*.
- Since 1966, the Security Council has *established 31 sanctions* regimes.

What are the major challenges with reference to UNSC?

- **Not a representative body** - The basic structure of the UNSC has remained almost unchanged since its foundation more than 75 years ago.
- **Ineffective body** - With profound changes in the realities of the global community, the UNSC is being questioned in terms of its legitimacy, effectiveness, and representativeness.

- **Misuse of veto powers** - *Russia has cast more vetoes* (estimated to be 120 times or close to half of all vetoes) than the three western members of the club.
- Often P-5 countries use veto to shield their allies and target the enemies.
- For instance, China repeatedly blocks India's efforts to include confirmed Pakistani terrorists in the sanctions list.
- **Increasing global issues** - The issues have diversified over the years to include peacebuilding, conflict prevention, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism and protection of civilians.

What lies ahead?

- **Make it inclusive** - The G4 Countries and L69 Group has been calling for the enlargement of both permanent and non-permanent categories as well as supporting each other's bids for permanent seats on the Council.

The G4 countries includes Brazil, Germany, India and Japan which was created in 2004.

The L.69 group is a group pro-reform member states, including primarily developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. It currently has 42 countries as its members including India.

- **Facilitate intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** - The UNGA has decided to facilitate the reform process through IGN framework on equitable representation and expansion of the UNSC.
- But it was dampened by the U.S., Russia and China being opposed to serious reform of the Council.
- **Implement Razali Reform Plan** - In 1997, the Razali plan was proposed *by the then UNGA president* Ismail Razali.
- It is a proposal *to enlarge the UNSC* from its present 15 members to 24 members.
- Under the plan, the UNSC would have five new permanent members without veto powers and four more non-permanent members.

References

1. [The Print | Election of Non-Permanent Members to UNSC](#)
2. [UN| United Nations Security Council](#)